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from RC, OD/CRS
box 2 of 4, 68-487

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF CENTRAL REFERENCE

7 March 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Intelligence Support

SUBJECT: Publications of Biographic Register, OCR

STATSPEC

REFERENCE: Your Memorandum to D/CR and
"Publications", dated 8 Feb. 66

1. This memorandum is in response to a series of questions in the referenced memorandum, as they apply specifically to the established publications series of the Biographic Register, OCR, as follows:

- a. How do you determine that a series or a publication is needed initially, and what review machinery do you have to decide when to continue or cease publication?

(1) Basically, all BR publications are prepared in response to the requirements of DCID No. 1/9 (New Series) Biographic Intelligence, effective 26 October 1961, which assigns to CIA "primary responsibility . . . for the production of biographic intelligence . . . on political, economic, scientific, technical, social and cultural personalities."

(2) Specifically, each series or issuances within series are initiated in response to specific requirements placed upon BR by elements of CIA (notably DDI/OCI and DDP), the Department of State, DIA, or other agencies.

(3) The genesis of each of the categories of BR publications is briefly indicated below. For statistical data on recent BR publishing activity, please see Attachment A.

~~SECRET~~

- 2 -

(a) Biographic Handbook

The requirement for this series is contained in USIB-D-51.1/5, 18 April 1963, which, with the approval of the DDI, transferred the responsibility for "Key Personalities" from NIS to OCR.

(b) Intelligence Memorandum

Requested by the Executive Secretariat, Department of State, to provide biographic intelligence support to the White House. (OCI Notice N-50-61, 12 July 1963, "Biographic Intelligence Support of the White House.")

(c) Intelligence Brief

Prepared in response to requests of the Department of State and Standing Requirements of the Intelligence Community for biographic reports on prominent figures who have been appointed to significant positions at home or abroad. The format of the Brief is such that it serves also for the Handbook series by simply replacing the seal with a photograph.

(d) Intelligence Research Aids (Selected)

Directories of Party and Government Officials in Communist Countries. Assumed by BR upon transfer of State's biographic responsibilities to CIA. Responsive to requirements of DDP, DDI/OCI, and the Foreign Service.

Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members of Foreign Governments. Assumed by transfer from State. Responsive to needs of the White House and the Intelligence Community since 1947.

Appearances of Soviet (and ChiCom) Leaders. Original request from Chief, BR Division, DDP; transferred to BR from RPB/FBIS. Also serves OCI/Military requirements, State, and many others. The ChiCom edition was transferred to BR by State and expanded at the request of DDI/OCI.

(e) Intelligence Report

Responsive to specific requests for biographic studies in depth of groups of people of intelligence interest (e.g., Biographies of Eritrean Dissidents) levied by Department of State (Regional Bureaus or Research Offices) and by DDP and DDI/OCI.

SECRET

- 3 -

(4) The nature and level of most requirements for biographic support are such that BR/OCR retains very little authority to make unilateral decisions "to continue or cease publication" in the sense inferred from the reference. The Office of the D/CR maintains a continuing review of all BR publications in accordance with long-established procedures. (See Attachment B).

b. How would you rank these publications in order of essentiality or importance?

(1) There is provided as Attachment C a record of publications produced by the Biographic Register during December 1965. It is quite representative of the subject range of Register production in recent years. Ranking of the individual items by essentiality would depend in large part, in our view, on the judgments of the managers of production offices and the mechanisms they employ for setting priority of effort among competing programs. OCR management arbitrates where the combination of competing demands for service exceeds its resources and refers unresolved conflicts to higher authority for resolution.

(2) Within the above pattern for allocation of resources, the following OCR observations may be made concerning essentiality, e.g., of the various publications produced in December 1965. Presumably, the production of briefs and memoranda in response to requests of senior officers of the White House, Agency and Department of State, would be the last service BR would want to or be authorized to eliminate. Programed publications such as the Biographic Handbooks and the Intelligence Research Aids could be produced less frequently, with restricted subject scope, or, indeed, eliminated. Here, however, our tools are very imprecise for determining the effect on the using community. If these highly useful reference tools were abandoned, customer offices might begin the maintenance of more costly local biographic files, or turn to the Biographic Register more frequently for spot service so that the net cost of biographic service would rise.

(3) The Biographic Handbooks clearly carry at least the priority value of the National Intelligence Surveys to which they now relate (as successors to the earlier "Key Personalities" sections), and there is good evidence that the handbooks are useful throughout the intelligence community, and particularly, in the field. The continuing growth in demand for the two monthly Research Aids suggests that the very broad spectrum of users would indeed seek the information elsewhere were these to be eliminated.

SECRET

SECRET

- 4 -

c. How could you reduce the number of publications which you now issue?

(1) The Biographic Register performs continuing informal checks of user reaction to its product. A review of its publications similar to that now under way in Foreign Documents Division is being considered. Several CHIVE task teams are now studying aspects of user requirements for biographic information services.

(2) In fact, a reduction of publishing effort in the Biographic Register has been imposed through the personnel reductions of the past two years and is being continuously adjusted as changing customer demands require. BR necessarily strikes a balance between input and output levels of effort, given the resources available at any particular time. Reduction of input effort has occurred in the form of a virtual cessation of dossier building. Output reduction has occurred through stretch-out in the frequency of updating of previously issued reference tools. Even in the category of Biographic Handbooks, most of those issued to date carry briefs for 20 to 40 individuals although the original goals were set at 100 to 200 entries depending on the importance of the country concerned. Augmentation of BR professional staff on the order of about 40-50% would, in OCR's judgment, be required to meet even the modest original goals for the Biographic Handbooks and to maintain a regular schedule of up-dating of the again modest list of key reference aids the Register has from time to time produced in the past.

2. BR issues no periodicals. Certain of the Research Aids are updated at regular intervals; others, as needed, in response to Standing Requirements. The Handbooks are part of a long-term program based on Standing Requirements. The remainder of BR's production is on an ad hoc basis.

JOHN K. VANCE
Director of Central Reference

Attachments

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